

Cavanagh, Forest Ranger

The Great Conservation Novel

By HAMLIN GARLAND

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The sheriff banged his hand upon the table. "That's the whole mystery. I see it all now. He's up there concealing this man. He's given out this smallpox scare just to keep the officers away from him. Now you've got it."

The thunder in his voice drew toward him all those who remained in the dining room, and Lee found herself ringed about by a dozen excited men, but she did not flinch. She was too deeply concerned over Cavanagh's fate to be afraid, and, besides, Redfield and the forester were beside her.

The supervisor was staggered by Gregg's accusation and by certain confirmatory facts in his own possession, but he defended Cavanagh bravely. "You're crazy," he replied. "Why should Ross do such a foolish thing? What is his motive? What interest would he have in this man Edwards, whom you call a tramp? He can't be a relative and certainly not a friend of Cavanagh's, for you say he is a convict. Come, now, your hatred of Cavanagh has gone too far."

Gregg was somewhat cooled by this dash of reason, but replied: "I don't know what relation he is, but these are facts. He's concealing an escaped convict, and he knows it."

Dalton put in a quiet word. "What is the use of shouting a judgment against a man like Cavanagh before you know the facts? He's one of the best and ablest rangers on this forest. I don't know why he has resigned, but I'm sure—"

"Has he resigned?" asked Gregg eagerly.

"He has."

"A good job for him. I was about to circulate a petition to have him removed."

"If all the stockmen in the valley had signed a petition against him it wouldn't have done any good," replied Dalton. "We know a good man when we see him. I'm here to offer him promotion, not to punish him."

Lee, looking about at the faces of these men and seeing disappointment in their faces, lost the keen sting of her own humiliation. "In the midst of such a fight as this how can he give time or thought to me?" Painful as the admission was, she was forced to admit that she was a very humble factor in a very large campaign. "But suppose he falls ill?" Her face grew white and set and her lips bitter. "That would be the final tragic touch," she thought, "to have him come down of a plague from nursing one of Sam Gregg's sheep herders." Aloud she said: "His resignation comes just in time, doesn't it? He can now be sick without loss to the service."

Dalton answered her. "The supervisor has not accepted his resignation. On the contrary, I shall offer him a higher position. His career as a forester is only beginning. He would be foolish to give up the work now, when the avenues of promotion are just opening. I can offer him very soon the supervision of a forest."

As they talked Lee felt herself sinking the while her lover rose. It was all true. The forester was right. Ross was capable of any work they might demand of him. He was too skilled, too intelligent, too manly, to remain in the forest, heroic as his duties seemed.

Upon this discussion Ltze, hobbling painfully, appeared. With a cry of surprise Lee rose to meet her.

"Mother, you must not do this!" She waved her hand away. "I'm all right," she said, "barring the big marbles in my slippers." Then she turned to Dalton. "Now, what's it all about? Is it true that Ross is down?"

"No. So far as we know, he is well."

"Well, I'm going to find out. I don't intend to set here and have him up there without a cook or a nurse."

At this moment a tall, fair young fellow, dressed in a ranger's uniform, entered the room and made his way directly to the spot where Lee, her mother and Redfield were standing.

"Mr. Supervisor, Cavanagh has sent me to tell you that he needs a doctor. He's got a sick man up at the station, and he's afraid it's a case of smallpox. He turned to Lee. "He told me to tell you that he would have written, only he was afraid to even send a letter out."

"What does he need?" asked Redfield.

"He needs medicine and food, a doctor, and he ought to have a nurse."

"That's my job," said Ltze.

"Nonsense!" said Redfield. "You're not fit to ride a mile. I won't hear of your going."

"You wait and see. I'm going, and you can't stop me."

"Who is the man with him?" asked the forester.

"I don't know—an old herder, he said. He said he could take care of him all right for the present, but that if he were taken down himself—"

Lee's mounting emotion broke from her in a little cry. "Oh, Mr. Redfield, please let me go too! I want to help!"

Redfield said: "I'll telephone to Sulphur City and ask Brooks to get a nurse and come down as soon as possible. Meanwhile I'll go out to see what the conditions are."

"I'm going, too, I tell you," announced Ltze. "I've had the cursed disease, and I'm not afraid of it. We had three sieges of it in my family. You get me up there, and I'll do the rest."

"But you are ill!"

"I was, but I'm not now." Her voice was firmer than it had been for days. "All I needed was something to do. Ross Cavanagh has been like a son to me for two years. He's the one man in this country I'd turn my hand over for—barring yourself, Reddy—and it's my job to see him through this pinch."

In spite of all opposition she had her way. Returning to her room to get such clothing as she needed for her stay in the hills, she waited for Redfield to send a carriage to her. "I can't ride a horse no more," she sorrowfully admitted.

Lee's secret was no secret to any one there. Her wide eyes and heaving breast testified to the profound stir in her heart. She was in an anguish of fear lest Ross should already be in the grip of his loathsome enemy. That it had come to him by way of a brave and noble act made the situation only the more tragic.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PESTHOUSE.

Cavanagh had kept a keen watch over Wetherford, and when one night the old man began to complain of the ache in his bones his decision was instant.

"You've got it," he said. "It's up to us to move down the valley tomorrow."

Wetherford protested that he would as soon die in the hills as in the valley. "I don't want Lee Virginia to know, but if I seem liable to fade out I'd like Lee to be told that I didn't forget her and that I came back to find out how she was. I hate to be a nuisance to you, and so I'll go down the valley if you say so."

As he was about to turn in that night Ross heard a horse cross the bridge and, with intent to warn the rider of his danger, went to the door and called out: "Halt! Who's there?"

"A friend," replied the stranger in a weak voice.

Ross permitted the visitor to ride up to the pole. "I can't ask you in," he explained. "I've a sick man inside. Who are you, and what can I do for you?"

Notwithstanding this warning the rider dropped from his saddle and came into the light which streamed from the door.

"My name is Dunn," he began. "I'm from Deer Creek."

"I know you," responded the ranger. "You're that rancher I saw working in the ditch the day I went to telephone, and you've come to tell me something about that murder."

The other man broke into a whimper. "I'm a law-abiding man, Mr. Cavanagh," he began tremulously. "I've always kept the law and never intended to have anything to do with that business. I was dragged into it against my will. I've come to you because you're an officer of the federal law. You don't belong here. I trust you. You represent the president, and I want to tell you what I know, only I want you to promise not to bring me into it. I'm a man with a family, and I can't bear to have them know the truth."

There were deep agitation and complete sincerity in the rancher's choked and hesitant utterance, and Cavanagh turned cold with a premonition of what he was about to disclose. "I am not an officer of the law, Mr. Dunn, not in the sense you mean, but I will respect your wishes."

"I know that you are not an officer of the county law, but you're not a cattleman. It is your business to keep the peace in the wild country, and you do it. Everybody knows that. But I can't trust the officers of this country; they're all afraid of the cowboys. You are not afraid, and you represent the United States, and I'll tell you. I can't bear it any longer!" he wailed. "I must tell somebody. I can't sleep, and I can't eat. I've been like a man in a nightmare ever since. I had no hand in the killing—I didn't even see it done—but I knew it was going to happen. I saw the committee appointed. The meeting that decided it was held in my barn, but I didn't know what they intended to do. You believe me, don't you?" He peered up at Cavanagh with white face and wild eyes. "I'm over seventy years of age, Mr. Cavanagh, and I've been a law-abiding citizen all my life."

His mind, shattered by the weight of his ghastly secret, was in confusion, and, perceiving this, Cavanagh began to question him gently. One by one he procured the names of those who voted to "deal with" the herders. One by one he obtained also the list of those named on "the committee of reprisal," and as the broken man delivered himself of these accusing facts he grew calmer. "I didn't know—I couldn't believe—that the men on that committee could chop and burn!" His utterance faltered him again, and he fell silent abruptly.

"They must have been drunk—mad drunk," retorted Cavanagh. "And yet who would believe that even drunk could inflame white men to such devil's work? When did you first know what had been done?"

"That night after it was done one of the men, my neighbor, who was drawn on the committee, came to my house and asked me to give him a bed. He was afraid to go home. I can't face my wife and children," he said. He

meant help!"

meant help!"

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meant help!"

meant help!"

meant help!"

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meant help!"



HE BROKE DOWN ALTOGETHER AND SOBBED BITTERLY.

told me what he'd seen, and then when I remembered that it had all been decided in my stable and the committee appointed there I began to tremble. You believe I'm telling the truth, don't you?" he again asked, with piteous accent.

"Yes, I believe you. You must tell this story to the judge. It will end the reign of the cattlemen."

"Oh, no; I can't do that."

"You must do that. It is your duty as a Christian man and citizen."

"No, no; I'll stay and help you—I'll do anything but that. I'm afraid to tell what I know. They would burn me alive. I'm not a western man. I've never been in a criminal court. I don't belong to this wild country. I came out here because my daughter is not strong, and now—"

He broke down altogether and, leaning against his horse's side, sobbed pitifully.

Cavanagh, convinced that the old man's mind was too deeply affected to enable him to find his way back over the rough trail that night, spoke to him gently. "I'll get you something to eat," he said. "Sit down here and rest and compose yourself."

Wetherford turned a wild eye on the ranger as he re-entered. "Who's out there?" he asked. "Is it the marshal?"

"No; it's only one of the ranchers from below. He's tired and hungry, and I'm going to feed him," Ross replied, filled with a vivid sense of the diverse characters of the two men he was serving.

Dunn received the food with an eager hand, and after he had finished his refreshment Cavanagh remarked: "The whole country should be obliged to you for your visit to me. I shall send your information to Supervisor Redfield."

"Don't use my name," he begged. "They will kill me if they find out that I have told. We were all sworn to secrecy, and if I had not seen that fire, that pile of bodies—"

"I know, I know! It horrified me. It made me doubt humanity," responded Cavanagh. "We of the north cry out against the south for its lynchings, but here under our eyes goes on an equally horrible display of rage over the mere question of temporary advantage, over the appropriation of free grass, which is a federal resource—something which belongs neither to one claimant nor to the other, but to the people, and should be of value to the people. You must bring these men to punishment."

Dunn could only shiver in his horror and repeat his fear. "They'll kill me if I do."

Cavanagh at last said: "You must not attempt to ride back tonight. I can't give you lodging in the cabin because my patient is sick of smallpox, but you can camp in the barn till morning, then ride straight back to my friend Redfield and tell him what you've told me. He will see that you are protected. Make your deposition and leave the country if you are afraid to remain."

In the end the rancher promised to do this, but his tone was that of a broken and distraught dotard. All the landmarks of his life seemed suddenly shifted.

Meanwhile the sufferings of Wetherford were increasing, and Cavanagh was forced to give up all hope of getting him down the trail next morning, and when Swenson, the forest guard from the South Fork, knocked at the door to say that he had been to the valley and that the doctor was coming up with Redfield and the district forester Ross thanked him, but ordered him to go into camp across the river and to warn everybody to keep clear of the cabin. "Put your packages down outside the door," he added, "and take charge of the situation on the outside. I'll take care of the business inside."

Wetherford was in great pain, but the poison of the disease had mist his brain, and he no longer worried over the possible disclosure of his identity. At times he lost the sense of his surroundings and talked of his prison life or of the long ride northward. Once he rose in his bed to beat off the wolves which he said were attacking his pony.

He was a piteous figure as he struggled thus, and it needed neither his relationship to Lee nor his bravery in caring for the Basque herder to fill the ranger's heart with a desire to relieve his suffering. "Perhaps I should have sent for Lee at once," he mused as the light brought out the red signs of the plague.

Once the old man looked up with wide, dark, unseeing eyes and murmured, "I don't seem to know you."

"I'm a friend. My name is Cavanagh."

"I can't place you," he sadly admitted. "I feel pretty bad. If I ever get out of this place I'm going back to the

Fork. I'll get a gold mine; then I'll go back and make up for what Lee has gone through. I'm afraid to go back now."

"All right," Ross soothingly agreed. "But you'll have to keep quiet till you get over this fever you're suffering from."

"If Lee weren't so far away she'd come and nurse me. I'm pretty sick."

Swenson came back to say that probably Redfield and the doctor would reach the station by noon, and thereafter, for the reason that Cavanagh expected their coming, the hours dragged woefully. It was after 1 o'clock before Swenson announced that two teams were coming with three men and two women in them. "They'll be here in half an hour."

The ranger's heart leaped. Two women! Could one of them be Lee Virginia? What folly—what sweet, desperate folly! And the other—she could not be Lee, for Lee was too feeble to ride so far. "Stop them on the other side of the bridge," he commanded. "Don't let them cross the creek on any pretext."

As he stood in the door the flutter of a handkerchief, the waving of a hand, made his pulse glow and his eyes grow dim. It was Virginia!

Lee did not flutter a kerchief or wave a hand, but when Swenson stopped the carriage at the bridge she said: "No, you don't! I'm going across. I'm going to see Ross, and if he needs help I'm going to roll up my sleeves and take hold."

Cavanagh saw her advancing, and as she came near enough for his voice to reach her he called out: "Don't come any closer! Stop, I tell you!" His voice was stern. "You must not come a step nearer. Go back across the dead line and stay there. No one but the doctor shall enter this door. Now, that's final."

"I want to help!" she protested. "I know you do, but I won't have it. This quarantine is real, and it goes!"

"But suppose you yourself get sick?"

"We'll cross that bridge when we get to it. I'm all right so far, and I'll call for help when I need it."

His tone was imperative, and she obeyed, grumbling about his youth and the value of his life to the service.

"That's all very nice," he replied, "but I'm in it, and I don't intend to expose you or any one else to the contagion."

"I've had it once," she asserted. He looked at her and smiled in recognition of her subterfuge.

"No matter; you're ailing and might take it again, so toddle back. It's mighty good of you and of Lee to come, but there isn't a thing you can do, and here's the doctor," he added as he recognized the young student who passed for a physician in the Fork. He was a beardless youth of small experience and no great courage, and as he approached with hesitant feet he asked:

"Are you sure it's smallpox?"

Cavanagh smiled. "The indications are all that way. That last importation of Basques brought it probably from the steerage of the ship. I'm told they've had several cases over in the basin."

"Have you been vaccinated?"

"Yes, when I was in the army."

"Then you're all right."

"I hope so."

There was a certain comic relief in this long distance diagnosing of a "case" by a boy, and yet the tragic fact beneath it all was that Wetherford was dying, a broken and dishonored husband and father, and that his identity must be concealed from his wife and daughter, who were much more deeply concerned over the ranger than over the desperate condition of his patient. "And this must continue to be so," Cavanagh decided. And as he stood there looking toward the girl's fair figure on the bridge he came to the final, fixed determination never to speak one word or make a sign that might lead to the dying man's identification. "Of what use is it?" he asked himself. "Why should even Lee be made to suffer? Wetherford's poor mispent life is already over for her, and for Lee he is only a dim memory."

To be continued

Conaway-Vardeman

Charles Conaway, a popular young farmer of near Nelson and Miss Bonnie Vardeman, the attractive daughter of Rev. and Mrs. J. T. Vardeman, also of near Nelson, were quietly married on June 28th, the bride's uncle, Rev. Wm. Vardeman, officiating. We join in wishing these excellent young people a full measure of life's joys and successes.

Saves Two Lives

"Neither my sister nor myself might be living to-day, if it had not been for Dr. King's New Discovery," writes A. D. McDonald, of Fayetteville, N. C., R. F. D. No. 8, "for we both had frightful cough that no other remedy could help. We were told my sister had consumption. She was very weak and had night sweats but your wonderful medicine completely cured us both. It's the best I ever used or heard of." For sore lungs, coughs, colds, hemorrhage, lagrippe, asthma, hay fever, croup, whooping cough, all bronchial troubles, its supreme. Trial bottle free. 50c and \$1.00. Guaranteed by P. H. Franklin.

Pettis county got a good rain last Wednesday, June 28th.

FROM OUR EXCHANGES

NELSON

On Wednesday afternoon Mrs. Lew's Petry delightfully entertained the Wednesday Club and a few other friends. The hostess in a very unique manner had prepared cards in color scheme, pinning a card with bow of ribbon on each guest as they entered the parlor where they were requested to find in color the corresponding bow of ribbon tied to the chair. After the guests had all arrived amusing games and tricks were indulged in. Mrs. L. M. Hayne, Mrs. Carl Barnett and Mrs. Paul English being the winners of the prizes.

While cutting hay Wednesday the mule team that Wm. Elgin was driving became frightened and ran away throwing Mr. Elgin off of the mower hurting his side quite badly. The team ran a short distance and stopped. They were not hurt. The mower suffered slight damages. Mr. J. M. McClelland received word yesterday from his son, M. R. McClelland of Lexington, announcing his marriage. Mr. McClelland is well known here having been raised in this city and was liked by everyone, and The Record joins with his many friends in extending congratulations. Mrs. Cora Keehart of near Marshall, is spending a few days with her parents, Levi Smith and wife, near here.—Record.

There is more Catarrh in this section of the country than all the other diseases put together and until the last few years was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors pronounced it a local disease and prescribed local remedies, and by constantly failing to cure with local treatment, pronounced it incurable. Science has proven catarrh to be a constitutional disease and therefore requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is the only constitutional cure on the market. It is taken internally in doses from 10 drops to a teaspoonful. It acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. They offer one hundred dollars for any case it fails to cure. Send for circulars and testimonials.

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Take Hall's Family Pills for constipation.

ARROW ROCK

J. W. Amick, who has been our faithful mail carrier for the past four years will make his farewell trip today, and S. E. Fisher, his successor, will go on duty tomorrow, July 1. This change affects the individuals only as both are good men and either would be satisfactory to the general public. Mr. Amick will remain with us but we understand has not yet decided what line of business he will follow. A team ran off with Emmett Davis while cutting wheat Wednesday and tore the binder to pieces, but fortunately he was not hurt.—Statesman.

BLACKWATER

A. S. Venerable of Marshall, who has been visiting his sister, Mrs. J. F. Woolery since last Monday returned home Saturday. Life Pannell came near getting killed Saturday he was driving a team of mules belonging to Mrs. Will Shannon, the wagon was loaded with coal the team became frightened and ran away throwing the occupant out, the wheels ran over his neck and head. They thought at first he was dead. Dr. Shuck was called and dressed his wounds the last heard was getting along nicely.—News.

MIAMI

W. F. Lynn, one of the shareholders in the company that owns and operates the gasoline boat Belle of Glasgow, sold his interest last week to the Crispins at Dewitt. According to his agreement, V. A. Mattingley gave up the boat, and it was taken back to De Witt Thursday of last week. It will be used in transferring the wheat that Mr. Crispin expects to buy on the Saline side. Mr. Mattingley had been using the boat for a month to transport coal from Waverly to Miami. A dog belonging to Sylvester Dilley of north of town caused considerable excitement last week when it appeared to go mad and bit some stock and several other dogs. The dog was killed promptly, as were also the dogs it bit.—News.

'Every Month'

writes Lola P. Roberts, of Vienna, Mo., "I used to be sick most of the time and suffered with backache and headache. My Mother, who had been greatly helped by the use of Cardui, got me two bottles, and I have been well ever since."

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GILLIAM

The Union depot at this place caught fire Monday afternoon from a spark from the engine on the Red Flyer. It was quickly extinguished, however, by Agent Odell, who rushed to the scene with a bucket of water. A great number attended the Home coming services at Concord Sunday. Among the startling things happened there that day was the loss of a fine mare of Ed Brown's, who valued it at \$250. It was choked to death.—The Commercial Club this week circulated a petition to the Railway commissioner at Jefferson City for a new depot at this place. The paper had many signatures and has been sent in.—G. L. Mayfield, for the past year manager in the local mill, leaves Monday for Mt. Leonard, where he has accepted a similar position with Goodwin and Fletcher. He will move his family later on.—Globe.

SLATER

John Ruppert, who has a large fruit ranch at Ayres, says his fruit trees are loaded, some of the peach trees are breaking down already with their burden. He says dry weather is just the kind for fine fruit yield. In wet weather the fruit will blight. His wheat averaged 22 bushels and some of it so ripe it wasted in cutting. The corn, he says, is doing fine and with plenty of rain in July and August, will make a bumper crop.—Helen Gould arrived in Slater Saturday and can be seen at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Gould. Mother and babe both doing nicely.—Miss Louise Haas left for Colorado Springs this week for a few months visit and with the expectation that the climate might be beneficial to her health.—News.

Death in Roaring Fire

may not result from the work of fire bugs, but often severe burns are caused that make a quick need for Bucklen's Arnica Salve, the quickest, surest cure for burns, wounds, bruises, boils, sores. It subdues inflammation. It kills pain. It soothes and heals. Drives off skin eruptions, ulcers or piles. Only 25c at P. H. Franklins.

BLACKBURN

Miss Virginia Loper who has been the guest of her aunt, Mrs. C. S. Bulkley, in Kansas City for a month, came home Sunday evening. She was accompanied home by her cousin, Channing Bulkley, and Master Herbert Pardee who will make her a visit.—Mrs. W. A. Cooper and baby, of Odessa, who have been the guests of her mother, Mrs. M. K. Lillard, for a week, left Monday for Marshall for a visit with her sister, Miss Lura Lillard.—Prof. G. A. Hoffman, of Pella, arrived Sunday morning and held his farewell service with his congregation at Three Groves. He has accepted the presidency of a college in northern Iowa which takes him too far away to continue his services to this church.—Mr. Mawhiney's baby fell out of an upstairs window, fourteen feet from the ground, Monday and as far as could be ascertained escaped injury.—Record.

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